

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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June 1952

Whole Number 237

"THE LIGHT OF ASIA"

Forepaugh's Wonderful White Elephant Safely Landed—Not Large, but He Will Grow

(Philadelphia, Pa., Bulletin, March 21, 1884)

The Inman Line steamer City of Chester, from Liverpool, which reached New York yesterday afternoon, had on board the white elephant which Manager Adam Forepaugh has imported, and which is the first of the kind to come to this country. To-day the sacred animal is undergoing the necessary inspection by the Custom House officials, and either to-night or to-morrow it will come to this city and go into winter quarters. The Light of Asia's name in Siam was Rimanmankan, the English for which is Tiger-eater. There is nothing about him, however, that suggests in any way a consumption of tigers. He is not of the whiteness of new-fallen snow, but he is so light in color and so strikingly in contrast to the ordinary elephant that calling him white is not a misnomer. He was brought over by Mr. Sam Watson, the agent for Mr. Adam Forepaugh.

About a year ago Mr. Forepaugh sent an agent after a white elephant, but he was unable to get one. When Mr. Forepaugh heard that Mr. Barnum had got one he sent Mr. Watson over to England to see Mr. William Cross, the naturalist. Mr. Cross said that white elephants were scarce.

"I offered him £10,000," Mr. Watson said yesterday, "and he said that he would get one."

Then, Mr. Watson says, Mr. Cross notified an agent to buy a white elephant, but he did not succeed. Then another agent, Mr. Tuan Ah-Hin-Ma, a Chinese gentleman in the opium business, bought for a considerable sum of money Light of Asia. How Mr. Ah-Hin-Ma bought him, or from whom, Mr. Watson says, is a secret that Mr. Ah-Hin-Ma has refused to divulge. The elephant was shipped to Marseilles, where it was received by Mr. Cross's agent, and thence it was sent overland to Liverpool, and put in the City of Chester.

"I heard that Mr. Barnum's elephant was to leave on March 13," Mr. Watson said, "so I got Light of Asia off on March 6. We wanted to keep the fact that we had a white elephant entirely quiet until we got over in America, but the reporters got wind of it in Liverpool and saw it on the steamer."

The Light of Asia was put into a box stall in the aft hatch, where a reporter reached him by climbing down two ladders. When the Light of Asia was first put on board the vessel he was quite lively and vicious. His box was swung aboard by a derrick, and as it was in mid-air the elephant thrust his head through the side. Yesterday he was extremely quiet and docile, which may be owing to the large amount of brandy he drank daily during the voyage. The light is very dim in the aft hatch, and when the reporter first saw the elephant in his box he seemed for the moment to be perfectly white. A

more careful examination with a lantern showed that his color was a light gray, a shade lighter, perhaps, than cigar ashes. The color was of the same shade all over the body, except behind the ears, on the inside of the ears, along the belly, and at the juncture of the chest and fore legs. These places were of a light pink, and were soft and smooth to the touch. There was a narrow line of pink also on the trunk and around the brown eyes. There was a scant growth of hair all over the body. The hairs were three-quarters of an inch long, and grew far apart, looking like the after-growth hairs which come sometimes on bald heads. The elephant has eighteen toe nails, five on each of his fore feet and four on each of his hind feet. They are whitish, and look like irregular-shaped pieces of ivory.

The Light of Asia is not a large elephant, but Mr. Forepaugh says that he will grow, as he is only six years old. He is 4 feet 8 inches in height, and weighs 2,000 pounds. His tusks are just beginning to show themselves, and are not more than an inch long. His trunk is well shaped, and his tail reaches within four inches of the ground. It looks quite like a rat's tail. The tuft of hair which gives the paint-brush appearance to the usual tail is wanting.

The Light of Asia had a very rough time of it on the voyage across. He was very sea sick, and was only sustained by brandy and water, which he drank by the bucketful. His daily diet was a bushel or so of boiled potatoes, a dozen heads of cabbage, and a lot of bread. He also ate fruit, which the ladies in the cabin, who were much interested in him, used to send him daily from the table. The voyage was the roughest that the City of Chester ever experienced, and on seven occasions the elephant was knocked down by the pitch of the vessel. On Saturday, when a very heavy sea struck the vessel, he was thrown against the door of his box, which gave way, and he brought up against a large box of oranges. He picked himself up, opened the box, and ate all the oranges before they could get him back into his quarters. Charles Fullford, the elephant trainer who has him in charge, says that the elephant showed great ingenuity in lying down and adapting himself to the pitch of the vessel. A gentleman whose travels in Asia have fitted him for expressing an opinion on the genuineness of this elephant, says:

"Of the two countries which possess the famous white elephant, viz., Siam and Burmah, the former stands first, both in the dignity attached to the animal itself and in the superior excellence of its breed, which has been amply proved by Burmah's repeated efforts to gain forcible possession of one of the Siamese white elephants in order to improve her own inferior stock. In Burmah beasts of this cherished race have more than once been sold or given away, whereas in Siam it would be a heinous crime to do either. Probably the best living specimen of the albino elephant is the larger of the two animals which I inspected last September in the King of Siam's palace at Bangkok.

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Its general color was a dull stone-gray, several shades lighter than that of the ordinary elephant. Its eyes were of a deep, clear blue, this being one of the most unerring signs of pure race. Its ears were entirely white on the inner side, and glistening as if smeared with fresh oil. On the back were several cream-colored patches or splashes, strongly outlined upon the skin, and not tending to melt into it in any way.

"It is a common mistake to suppose that the comparative value of a white elephant is determined by the amount of white surface which he exhibits. Nothing could well be further from the truth. In fact, when any elephant shows a large surface of whitened skin on any part of him (more especially about the head), the whiteness being of a chalky cast, and tending to fade gradually into the surrounding hide, this alone is sufficient to stamp him as not a true specimen of the precious breed. Many such elephants are to be found in South Africa, one of which was not long since caught and sent to England, where its whitish tint was discovered to be due to the combined influences of age and sickness.

"The white streak or blotch sometimes found on the broader part of the trunk close to its junction with the forehead is a frequent though not invariable mark of the genuine breed. But that whiteness of the toes, upon which some travelers have laid so much stress, cannot be reckoned among the distinctive characteristics of the white species at all. On the one hand, it is not apparent in either of the white elephants shown me at Bankok. On the other, it is very often found in elephants of the ordinary kind, without any pretensions whatever to 'white blood.' In some of these cases the peculiarity is the result of constant friction (as in the palm of a negro's hand), while in others it is produced by continual immersion in wet or marshy soil of such regions as Siam, Burmah and the great swamps of Southern Africa.

"As regards the alleged worship of these animals by the Siamese, the notion is probably due to a confusion of the religious belief of those countries with that of Hindustan, where the elephant-headed deity Ganesha, or Pollear, unquestionably imparts to the great 'proboscidian' the same kind of sanctity which is given by the ape-like figure of Hannuman to the sacred monkeys of Benares. But the Siamese Princes whom I have consulted on the subject tell me that not merely white elephants, but also white fowls, ducks, &c., are held in a certain degree of respect, and that their countrymen venerate the white elephant as being the last transmigration of the soul of a 'Buddha' before attaining the final stage of Buddhahood."

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71, 72, 75, 78, 82, 87, 88, 89, 90,

91 95.

Beadles Waverley Library Nos. 26,

55 (poor), 88, 130 (fair), 159.

Boys and Girls Weekly (Frank Leslie)

Nos. 498, 643, 644, 767, 815.

Boys Own, Nos. 57, 61.

Deadwood Dick Library (Westbrook

1908) Nos. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13,

15 (fair), 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 29, 31,

32, 35, 44, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55,

56, 57, 60, 62, 63.

Merrymans Monthly (Comic) Apr. '65

Nick Nax (Comic) Nov. 1864.

New Buffalo Bill Weekly. Nos. 224

thru 249, 263 thru 315.

Pluck and Luck Nos. 487 (fair), 816

(fair), 1048, 1146, 1153, 1153,

1159, 1161, 1164, 1177, 1185, 1188,

1191, 1192, 1390, 1445.

Seaside Library Nos. 951, 965, 989. Bd

Wide Awake Library, Nos. 809, 1175,

1189. (All fair condition).

NORMAN J. BECKETT

48 Valley Road

Lexington, Massachusetts

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

A. W. Lawson, 13 Charles Square, Hoxton, N. 1, London, England, wants Boys of London and New York Nos. 750 and 777. Will give a good trade for them.

F. F. Johnson, 1485 So. 2nd, East, Salt Lake City 4, Utah, is a Boys Book reader and trader.

A fellow by the name of Perc Turner, from out Indiana way, wanted to know where he could get some of the old 5¢ novels, such as Buffalo Bill, James Boys, Tip Top, etc., and a copy of the Roundup was mailed to him some 4 or 5 months ago. Just heard when he saw the high prices being asked for them, that he had a shock and died.

See the nice ads of both Norman Beckett and P. J. Moran enclosed, both members of the Brotherhood.

Raymond L. Caldwell, P. O. Bx 515, Lancaster, Pa., is coming along fine, so is Harry St. Clair, both had operations.

L. D. Webster, of Cortland, N. Y. is coming along good.

Charles Duprez, Bellerose, L. I., N. Y., just lost his oldest son, and feels very blue over it. Send him a few words of cheer, Pard.

Expect Edward T. LeBlanc to come in as associate editor of the Round-Up soon. More on this later.

St. George Rathbone wrote the Old and Young Broadbrim stories.

J. P. Guinon says: I'll be looking for your article on Snaps by Ima Tellyn, as I always like to read your stuff. That particular library has quite a history, originating in England way back yonder and having been reprinted times without number. I don't think I ever read one, or if I did I have forgotten it, although in the old days I handled lots of them when swapping around. Why I did it all is a mystery except that I liked to look at the pictures. Too bad I didn't have sense enough to hang onto about ten thousand of the rare ones. I'd like to have a few sets of James Boys Weekly right about now. Wow!

All the rubber stamps that are the despair of collectors nowadays and fill most of them with rage were slapped on the front covers of those novels by guys I corresponded with regularly and swapped novels with by the hundreds. I'm glad to say today that I never stamped more than a very, very few novels. I had a small stamp that announced that I was an agent for the Saturday Evening Post (back in 1903 or thereabouts) and there may be a novel or two still in existence that exhibits that stamp. I have one that I know of. A guy named Perine was the worst about stamping novels. He had a stamp half as big as a novel cover, and he poured it on every novel he got hold of. I used to cuss him out for it but it did no good. Nearly all the boys had rubber stamps but most of them were small, with the exception of Perine and another chap named W. H. Alkire. He and Rufus Odell, of New City, N. Y., went in heavily for Tip Tops and at one time they both had several complete sets. Odell once offered me the first 200 numbers of Tip Top in mint condition for \$8.00 but I didn't have the dough.

To bad that Mr. H. Barr Patten could not live to read the "Memorable Visit, Patten-ted," being an account of Harry A. Weill's visit to his father which he hopes some day to relate. Also there will be further contributions anent Golden Hours, the notes for which (compiled some years ago) are on hand awaiting transcription. Harry also says Mr. Fred T. Singleton may not have been aware of it but in his reminiscences which appeared in the May 1951 issue and his recital of the gadgets, gimcracks and souvenirs which delighted the hearts of the youngsters in the 1880s and 90's he was relating, verbatim, the experiences of the writer's juvenile days: telescopes, patent pants buttons, (he makes no mention of that instrument of torture, the corset waist, which little boys were compelled to wear), boxes of silk ribbon remnants (we had 'em), real type printing presses and outfits, (does Mr. S. recall the muss which the

printing ink made, distributed all over the premises?). Samantha at Saratoga: What about Little Lord Fauntleroy, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, Peck's Bad Boy and other literature of like character incident to that era? Gilt edge and ribbon-fringed visiting cards, magic lanterns, (no mention made of Kaleidoscopes with their prismatic changes of colors which entranced the younger element, and with which the oldsters also beguiled an hour. Did time permit the list could be continued indefinitely. Sweet recollections of childhood which bring sad memories as well as pleasant ones! The firm of Robert H. Ingersoll & Bro. of Cortland Street, N. Y. C. issued annually a catalog, illustrated, listing these and numerous other novelties; perhaps it is for some of these that Fred sent the money orders and stamps to which he makes allusion.

George Flaum and others are in favor of a national convention of the Happy Hours Brotherhood, sounds good all around.

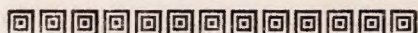
I will give three or four times its value in trade for "Golden Argosy" No. 8 of Vol. 4, dated January 23, 1886. And I will do the same for "Golden Argosy," run from No. 40, of Vol. 3, September 5, 1885, through No. 45, Vol. 3, October 10, 1885. And I will make the same kind of offer for American Boy for March, 1903, thru July, 1903, and the bound volume called DUTTON'S HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1905. And if it is necessary to take the volumes containing the above numbers in order to get the numbers that are wanted, this offer holds for the volumes also.

P. J. MORAN

619 Santa Ray Ave., Oakland 10, Cal.

(advertisement)

Ye editor Ralph F. Cummins has a lot of Tip Tops and Work and Wins for sale, also New Buffalo Bill Weeklies. Also what about the Dime Novel Index Digest, don't no one want them after all our hard work in getting them out to make it easier for every one to check up their back Round-Ups?? Just think, for only 25¢ can you beat it. There's a picture of an old novel on the front cover. PLEASE DO GET YOUR COPY NOW!

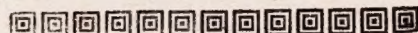


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619 Santa Ray Ave.

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Has the following for sale, where not priced, prices sent on request.
Everything sent P.P.

Young Men of America #567 to 634.

War Library #78

Wide Awake Weekly #142 145 149 150

Work and Win, 30 nos., mostly between Nos. 700 and 900.

Old Detective Story Magazines dated around the later 19's and 20's, a few earlier or later, about 150 in all. Containing nearly all the Chang and Rafferty stories, mostly good condition.

The Popular Magazine, nearly complete run from Nov. 1903 to Dec. 1917, and some later issues, over 500 in all.

Argosy—about 150 ranging from the year 1930 to 1940 and some others. Including some old All Story and Argosy All Story.

About 300 mixed pulp mags, including Shadow, Doc Savage, Weird, West, etc.

Wide Awake Library #2 3 13 28 29 52 69 105 137 144 151 189 192 to 196 251
252 253 223 300 342 343 421 462 525 526 565 589 635 642 648 656 769
792 912 919 937 1007 1018 1025 1032 1034 1047 1065 1102 1104 1134
1135 1140 1141 1157 1161 1162 1167 1172 1190 1191 1195 1216 1227
1248 1262 1265 1267 1268 1276 1290 1292 1293 1321

Excerpts from old pulp magazines, mostly The Popular Mag, Argosy and Argosy All Story. Each excerpt mainly contains a complete novel or novelette, or a long continued novel extracted from several mags and bound together, some times with picture cover from magazine, or continued enclosed, about 350 excerpts.

Paper Bound Books and Miscellaneous.

Buckskin Joe, by Sillingsby (Indian story), Street and Smith, price \$1.00.

Capt. Kyd, or the Wizard of the Sea, by Prof. J. H. Ingraham, \$2.00.

The Flying Dutchman by Russell and The Phantam Ship by Marryat, this is also a Flying Dutchman story, both for \$3.00.

He; a companion to She, by H. Ryder Haggard (Probably a parody on Haggard) \$1.00.

Man of Death, by L. C. Carleton, \$1.00.

The Three Spaniards, by George Walker, \$2.00.

William Wallace Cook novels in the Adventure Library, 60¢ each.

Diamond Dick Jr. Weeklies, without covers, 300 nos. between 1 and 400.

About 250 other paper bound books of Adventure and Romance.

About 20 Buffalo Bill books, in Far West and Great Western Libraries.

Nearly all of Gustave Aimard's works in Lowells Library.

About 8 books by Ensign Clark Fitch.

About 50 of St. George Rathborne Books.

About 100 Merriwell Series.